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ABSTRACT

The inservice teacher education course described is designed for elementary school teachers seeking to improve their teaching skills in diagnostic reading. The scope and sequencing of topics in the course are outlined. The activities and resources involved in using course materials are described and ordering information is provided. A critique of the course is included. (JD)

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DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER IN-SERVICE EDUCATION MATERIALS

A. SUMMARY INFORMATION

Title: COMPETENCY IN TEACHING READING

Publication Date(s): 1972

Intended Users: Teachers, preservice and inservice, seeking diagnostic reading teaching skills

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Number: Not specified; 5-15 probably optimal

Primary Focus: Course building knowledge about skills of testing and teaching for reading instruction are highlighted.

School subject(s) and/or in-service topic(s) covered: This includes detailed instruction through the written word in strategies of testing and teaching for reading skills categorized as 1) recognition (sight word, discrimination, phonic word attack, and structural and syllabic word attack skills), and 2) comprehension (paragraph meaning skills of recall, interpretation, extrapolation, and evaluation). It is focused on basic principles intended to be applicatable in all types of reading programs.

What participant does in using the materials:

Participant reads the textbook and completes and scores independently extensive written exercises and self-tests. Depending on local decisions, lecture/explanation by an instructor and/or skill practice through role-play, microteaching, etc. (supervised or unsupervised), may be provided. A performance measure is supplied for optional use as a diagnostic pretest.

Resources:

Each teacher needs a copy of the text (513 pp.) written by Carl J. Wallen, University of Oregon. A 92-page Instructor's Guide contains performance measures and general recommendations for course organization. Local leaders must provide, if desired, instructor for lectures, leadership for informal discussion, and/or substantive and organizational arrangements for skill practice. It could be used selectively, but total course requires 4-7 hours per week for eleven weeks.

Describer critique:

This is a comprehensive text in basic principles with unusually extensive exercises requiring written application of testing/teaching strategies. As a text, it develops "knowledge about" instructional skills; author recommends practice in use of skills, but provides limited assistance in its organization. It is intended as a text for a university course, but may be adapted to local inservice programs with skill and time.

word recognition

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SP 013 911

B. IN-DEPTH INFORMATION

Title: COMPETENCY IN TEACHING READING

Publication Date(s): 1972

Intended Users: Teachers pre-service and in-service seeking diagnostic reading teaching skills

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Number: Not specified; 5-15 probably optimal

Primary Focus: Course building knowledge about skills of testing and teaching for reading instruction are highlighted.

1.0 PURPOSES:

The author's rationale and intentions are stated in the text and the Instructor's Guide:

1. Teachers need "competency in using strategies for identifying and providing for children's reading-skill needs" because (a) "reading skills are obviously important" and (b) given such competency, they will be freer to spend time making reading "joyous and purposeful."
2. Competencies were selected on the basis of their (a) importance – "most people would probably identify the crucial competency of a reading teacher as diagnostic teaching" and (b) universality – the competencies are intended to be "useful with all methods and materials commonly used in teaching reading."
3. The text is intended to "overcome the primary weakness" of most texts used to prepare reading teachers – namely, explanations of theoretical principles with "little or no guidance in applying them in classroom situations." The author states that the text "guides teachers in translating words to deeds, because it is organized to facilitate transfer of learning from the verbal to the practical level."

The general purpose is "to help you develop your competency in designing and conducting tests and lessons suitable for specific reading-skill objectives." A teacher taking the course is expected to be able "to sit down with a child and teach him something without having to depend on a teacher's guide" and "to adapt instruction to the child, rather than the other way around."

Specific objectives are stated in the Instructor's Guide. Teachers are expected "to be able to test for/teach for" each of the categories of skill objectives for which strategies are presented (see 2.0).

2.0 CONTENT — Scope and Sequencing of Topics:

The bulk of the text is devoted to testing and teaching strategies for reading skills categorized as recognition and comprehension:

Section I - Recognition Skills (211 pp.) Two chapters (one each on testing and teaching strategies) for each of the following: (a) sight word skills; (b) word attack readiness: discrimination skills; (c) phonic word attack skills; and (d) structural and syllabic word attack skills. One additional chapter provides a theoretical introduction to phonic, structural, and syllabic patterns.

Section II - Comprehension Skills (214 pp.) Word meaning skills are discussed in two chapters, one each on testing and teaching strategies. Four additional chapters present testing strategies for four different types of paragraph meaning skills: skills of recall, interpretation, extrapolation, and evaluation. One chapter discusses teaching strategies for paragraph meaning skills.

Each chapter in these two sections is built around a few basic principles, supported by an explanation of their application and numerous examples. Thus, the chapter on teaching strategies for word attack readiness: discrimination skills is based on two principles: (1) "Vary the groupings of words presented to children so as to clarify the distinctive look (visual discrimination) or sound (auditory discrimination) of specific language patterns;" and (2) "Guide the child's attention to the distinguishing features of specific language patterns by giving verbal and nonverbal clues." Many of the examples illustrate application of the principles in varying reading methods — linguistic, phonic, language experience, etc. In addition, at least half of each chapter is devoted to problem-solving exercises simulating classroom situations and a final self-test (all with answers).

Four sections, "And Now Reality," are interspersed through Sections I and II with instructions for practicing and the testing/teaching strategies in role-play (with other teachers) and clinical (with children) settings.

Section III, In the Classroom (31 pp.) Discusses use of the testing and teaching strategies with different reading methods and ways to group for effective use of the strategies.

Also included are references on six major reading methods, a suggested sequence of objectives for recognition skills, and a glossary/index of the teaching/testing principles presented.

All users need not complete the entire course. The Instructor's Guide contains three forms of a performance measure, one of which may be used as a pretest to assess existing competency (see 4.0). Also, at many points, the text suggests rereading or skipping ahead, depending on performance on the exercises and self-tests.

3.0 ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES INVOLVED IN USE OF PRODUCT

3.1 Description of main in-service activities:

Teachers read the text, Competency in Teaching Reading, and complete the exercises and self-tests in each chapter. The text is "semi-programmed," and both coverage and rate of study may be differentiated. Skill practice through role play and/or work with students is recommended four times in the suggested 11-week course schedule; the Instructor's Guide reports greater course effectiveness when skill practice is provided. Lecture/discussion regarding the text is optional, as is supervision of skill practice (see 5.1).

3.2 Help given in use of product:

The text provides detailed instructions for its use. Both the text and Instructor's Guide offer general guidelines for skill practice, but an instructor/consultant must provide detailed substantive and organizational assistance as desired (see 5.1). The Instructor's Guide also briefly outlines alternative modes of course organization; local users, however, would need to provide much the same type of organizational leadership that would be expected from the instructor of a university course.

4.0 EVALUATION OF TEACHER INSERVICE LEARNING

Participants self-evaluate their acquisition of knowledge about skills through exercises and self-tests in the text. Three forms of a performance measure (printed in the Instructor's Guide with scoring keys) may be used as pre, post, and diagnostic measures administered by an instructor/consultant. Four subparts are included: testing recognition (8 items), testing comprehension (8 items), teaching recognition (6 items), and teaching comprehension (6 items). Each item states an objective (e.g., "Phonic word attack: initial consonant w") and lists four alternative strategies for achieving it from among which the teacher is to select one.

No observation forms, checklists, etc., are provided for assessing use of skills in practice sessions.

5.0 ORDERING INFORMATION

5.1 Resources required/recommended:

This is a one quarter (11 week) or one semester course with an instructor. The Author recommends as "ideal" instructor/lecture/explanation of text and supervised role play and clinical skill practice. Clinical skill practice requires access to students. Alternatively, skill practice may be unsupervised (author judges less effective) and/or lecture/explanation may be omitted (author suggests as possible for in-service application). For in-service use, author suggests microteaching (videotaped small group skill practice lessons); local users would need to provide tapes, VTR;s, organizational expertise, and guided observation forms.

Estimated time to complete entire course is 4-7 hours per week for 11 weeks. Each teacher requires copy of text.

5.2 Distributor name/address:

Science Research Associates
7200 South Leamington
Chicago, Illinois 60638

Phone: (312) 266-5000

5.3 Components/approximate costs:

Component	Purchase	Rental	No. Req.	Reusable
Competency in Teaching Reading (text) 513 pp. soft cover.	$7.96		1/teacher	No*
Instructor's Guide 92 pp. soft cover.	2.00		1	Yes**

*Exercises and self-tests (essential to the course) require writing in the book and are too extensive to be reproduced.

**All pages in the Instructor's Guide are perforated at the binding, facilitating easy removal of the 53pp. of performance measures.

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6.0 HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Identification of the developer:

Carl J. Wallen, Associate Professor of Education, University of Oregon developed the product.

6.2 How developed and when: This textbook on teaching reading competence was developed over 5 year period (1966-71), during which field testing was done and the results used to revise the program. No other information is available about the development of this product.

6.3 Evidence of effectiveness with users:

Field tests were conducted with experienced teachers,who were enrolled in a graduate program at the University of Oregon, as well as with undergraduate individuals preparing to become teachers. In one test several hundred teachers were pretested, used the materials, and were posttested using a parallel form of the pretest. The gains for both experienced and inexperienced teachers were significant.

In a second field test, teams of three teachers each worked with ten 4th graders who "evidenced reading deficiencies" for 40 minutes per day for one school year. The students involved in this study were reading at a 3.1 grade level in October and a 4.4 grade level the following May. There was no matched control group for this test.

Other field test data are shown in the introduction to the Instructor's Guide.

C. DESCRIBER CRITIQUE

Appropriateness / adaptability / technical quality:

This is a text for a university course. Application in locally sponsored in-service programs requires wise decisions about whether to: (1) provide lecture/explanation by an instructor (probably unnecessary); (2) schedule organized discussions (probably desirable, especially regarding application to particular reading programs); (3) use the course in toto or selectively (the testing, as opposed to teaching, strategies might be especially valuable); and (4) organize practice in use of the skills and if so, whether through role play, in classroom, and/or microteaching, supervised or unsupervised. Highly motivated experienced teachers able to be analytical about their own teaching could study the text independently and selectively.

Textbook design and printing are of top quality.

Content accuracy/social fairness/community acceptance issues:

There are no problems with social fairness.

In some districts, there might be content problems arising from author's intent to discuss and illustrate testing/teaching strategies applicable in any type of reading program. For example, in illustrating principle about eliciting responses in teaching phonic word attack skills, the text contains teacher statements such as "This letter (m) says 'Mmmm'; say 'Mmmm.'" In districts using only a linguistic program, such illustrations might be viewed askance. Note, however, that there are parallel examples of the major alternative approach to teaching phoneme-grapheme correspondence: "This word (pointing to card) is 'Man'; say 'Man.'"

Overall summary/comment:

If used in non-university in-service programs, this text might be too long, too comprehensive, and too oriented to learning by reading/writing. Skill practice (through role play, microteaching, etc.) is strongly recommended by the author, but users are on their own in organizing this practice and, more important, in providing feedback on skill application. Even more fundamentally, specific application of the generalized testing/teaching strategies depends on teacher ability to translate statements of reading objectives in a given reading program into the taxonomy used by the text. The describer judges that this can be done, but questions how many teachers will do it unless more assistance is given than in the text's 19 pages on the subject.

Despite these potential problems, the text has sufficient merit to warrant investigation by those interested in organizing a major in-service program in the fundamental principles of diagnostic reading instruction.